This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

3 3433 07574232 4

The Modern Comedy

O. R. HOWARD THOMSON

2 Poetry ( )

THE MODERN COMEDY

THE MODERN COMEDY

AND OTHER POEMS

O. R. HOWARD THOMSON

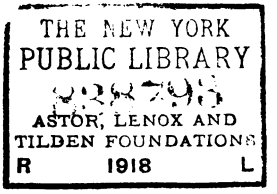
Author of

"RESURGAM: POEMS AND LYRICS"

THE CORNHILL COMPANY

BOSTON

Copyright 1918
By THE CORNHILL COMPANY


THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1918 L

TO THE
MEMORY OF MY FATHER
Dr. John Thomson

Acknowledgment is made of the courtesy of "Contemporary Verse"; "Art and Progress"; "Pennsylvania Grit"; "The Williamsport Sun" and "The Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin" for permission to reprint poems that originally appeared in these publications.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Modern Comedy	1
In a Forest Clearing..	8
Bergson:	
To Bergson	13
Bergsonian	14
"Creative Evolution"	15
Christmas: 1916	19
Summer Song	31
Song	32
Pictures:	
1. The Dune: Ogunquit, Maine ..	35
2. Sleep	36
Bankrupt	37
Dirge	38
Awake!	39
To Phyllis	40
To Phyllis in May Time	41
The Spirit of Wine	42
Magdalene	43
Ave Ecclesiastica!	44
Laggard..	45
En Route:	
Setting Out	49
In the Valley	50
The Rise of the Hill	51
Williamsport Poems:	
In Williamsport	55
In Memoriam — (S. T. McC.)	61
In Memoriam — (P. M. M.)	62
"Go Forth!"	63
To ———	64

THE MODERN COMEDY

THE MODERN COMEDY

I

The thing was monstrous! Never was a place
So ill-attuned to tragedy. The sky was blue —
Blue as the Virgin's mantle — and the dew
Still sparkled on the palm-leaves; all the grace
Of the world's youth, before the puzzled race
Of man went mad, was on it; and the sea
Kissed shore and shore kissed sea, as playfully
As beech-trees' branches touch and interlace.
Yet the vile thing was true! I saw him sprawled
Upon the sands, a knife stuck in his breast;
Dead at the spot to which he somehow crawled
With all his young soul's anguish unconfessed:
And overhead birds sang, the sky was blue —
Blue as the Virgin's mantle — that is true!

II

Surely the gods who rule this world of ours
Are sorry jests: their clumsy, big hands shake
And mar the best of all the pots they make:
Rank weeds o'er-run the places meant for flowers;
And youth, that should know naught but shining hours,
Toils amidst storms, till stumbling in the night
Lost is the path that leadeth to the height
Where stand effulgent the aerial towers.
Thus dropped the dice for Harold, who now lay
Dead in his beauty on the yellow sands;
A youth, who went, as boys go to their play,
Laughing, with eager, nervous, outstretched hands,
To grasp life's brimming, effervescing cup —
Sad places those in which we sometimes sup!

III

The cuckoo sings in England when the May
Whitens the hedges; grey owls blink their eyes;
Young foxes venture forth and butterflies
Are all a-search for clover. On such a day
First dawned the world on Harold: a world at play,
Compact of sunlight and the song of birds,
Of running brooks, green willows, lowing herds
And milkmaids singing in a leafy way.
Joy was his birthright and he held it fast;
Beauty, the stream in which he plunged his soul;
Laughter he knew and all unseeing passed
The yawning pits whose produce is but dole:
True child of spring, his dower deathless youth,
He had but smiled had he been told the truth.

IV

Life is a growth from little things to great,
From seven pounds to twelve or thirteen stone,
From consciousness of three drab things alone —
Food, drink and warmth — to brain growth intricate
And charged with passions; to youth at grips with fate,
Wrestling with fortune, with face to fame addressed,
Filled with vague longings, desires unexpressed —
Tales of the springtime when the wild things mate.
Some scour distant lands for soft-armed brides,
A Jacob labors seven years for Leah,
Though flowers sweeten English countrysides
And Rosalinds, mayhap, bloom very near.
Pluck! for the rose-bush will not bloom forever:
Who stays his hand shall drink its perfume never.

V

Rossetti's women wield a subtle charm
Born of long throats, wide shoulders and full lips
Through which, like scent of lilacs, their breath slips
Above their bosoms' never broken calm:
They probe the gifts the gods give for our joy —
Gifts we should take like bowls of gracious wine —
Drear worshippers at introspection's shrine
Missing the gold, they brood on its alloy.
And Harold's love had their smooth, satin skin
With Titian hair, late flower of a race
Whose ancient blood began to run too thin
For those who through the centuries held high place:
Too thin for those whose horizons are wide
And, light of heart, dispute the racing tide.

VI

Through the bearded barley where summer winds were blowing;
Full knee-deep in clover, breast-high in the wheat;
Laughing at Jack-rabbits that scuttled by their feet
Where the scarlet poppies made so brave a showing:
Under shady willows, by a broad stream flowing,
Home of trout and grayling rising after flies;
Looking towards the moorland where the sunlight dies,
Dies, but in the flushed-clouds lingers in its going.
Words came very seldom, though their hearts were beating
To the ancient love-song Nature sings so well;
Shoulder close to shoulder, heedless of the fleeting
Of the magic moments born of twilight's spell:

On they walked together, while the rooks were wheeling
And the elm-tree's shadow ever farther stealing.

VII

Ball-rooms are ball-rooms! Everything's on show —
Fair throats, wrinkled necks, innocence and guile,
Youth's wayward blush and forty's campaign smile —
A single glance and all there is to know
Stands naked in the glare. Yet youth would grow
And change the wonder of its threshold dreams
For adult facts: afar the future gleams
So having packed their packs they up and go.
Thus Harold must to Oxford and his books:
And she to London, where an ancient dame
Who knew three barons, kept at least two cooks
And played a skilled hand in the social game,
Should teach her things that girls must know today —
Things that one hears in any modern play.

VIII

June came with matron charms and ripening wheat,
Reluctant as a bride that men should see
The proofs she bore of her fertility,
So crowned her head with roses, dressed her feet
With pink-tipped, big-eyed daisies, made her seat
On clover blooms and flecked her ample skies
With fleecy clouds, that like great butterflies
Drifted untoiling in the noon-day heat.
And they went walking, all their schooling done,
Where golden shafts of light beneath the trees

Sought out the hare-bells, whispering of the sun
And braver flowers far beyond the seas.
He was a-tremble, undaunted yet dismayed,
And Pan went piping through the gathering shade.

IX

A fool had known just what the end must be;
For they, although they breathed the self-same air,
Were diverse as the Meredithan pair
And doomed to shipwreck as assuredly.
His plain, " I want you — will you marry me? "
Lacked light and fire; kindled no cleansing blaze
That had consumed the poison of the days
Spent midst the prophets of modernity.
No doubt she loved him — but she fain would preach,
Talked glibly, in a flattened London voice,
Of how true women must extend their reach;
Of female destiny and right of choice;
Holy eugenics. — Admit that what she said
Was true; Harold but flamed, blurted an oath and fled.

X

Here were a chance to preach and moralize;
To wag grave beards; aver, that in these days
The facts of life outweigh the lover's phrase
And innocence went out with Paradise.
Words, my dear sir, mere futile words! Our eyes
Are given us and as they are we see;
Some this thing, and some that; no two agree
On what is foolish nor on what is wise.

And Harold was of sunshine, plundering life
As humming-birds nasturtiums. God made the rose
To gladden man: why should we stick a knife
Into its heart to question how it blows?
Did Hamlet profit more than Falstaff? Bah!
Both lived and died beneath the same pole-star.

XI

Long, idle days beneath a sky of brass;
Long, idle nights beneath the tropic stars;
Sounds of green breakers on the coral bars;
Glimpses of islands clothed with living grass:
Days of the spindrift, when reefed sails sheeted home,
With hatches hammered down and scuppers filled,
Fighting her helmsman, taciturn and skilled,
The ship plunged shrieking through the smothering foam.
And through the days he sweated with the crew,
Jesting and swearing, till the time for rest;
Hearing strange chantries, old but ever new,
Sung by the children of the ocean's breast,
Who, with wind-wrinkled eyes, scanned fearlessly
The level stretches of the trackless sea.

XII

Thus to the island with the palm-trees waving,
Onward he voyaged, heedless of the goal;
Past buoyed channels where the waters shoal
To the cleanly beaches of the ocean's laving.
There, where the sea was ever, ever singing

THE MODERN COMEDY

To the slim brown people, children of the day,
Careless he sauntered, smiling at their play,
Watching sharp-eyed sea-birds high above them winging:
Greeting all adventures nor asking of their end;
Forming strange half-friendships, drinking in the air,
Seeing Olu's maiden at the beach's bend
Rinsing Olu's raiment, letting down her hair.
Living, till I found him sprawled across the sand,
As strong men have lived ever in an alien land.

XIII

Thank God for mercies! for the curtains hung
About the places hallowed by our pain;
For shrouding mists and sight-effacing rain.
Thrice damned this earth, if to the world were flung
Wide open, doors of temples; if souls o'er-thrown
By infinite despair were stuff for prying eyes
To classify, dissect, probe, analyze
And ticket like a rare reptilian bone.
We should hold draperies in reverence,
Nor lift the kerchief from a dead man's face;
They who have greatly suffered and gone hence
May well demand such measure of our grace:
They came from shadows — tasted of life's pain —
And to the shadows have returned again.

IN A FOREST CLEARING

Heine, the wise old singer,
  Seeker of Gods who fled,
Swore that they hid in caverns,
  Slumbered, but were not dead.

I in a forest
Coming from mass,
Saw forms dancing
On the cool grass.

Pink-nailed their feet
Tripped in the dew:
Their hair bore oak-leaves,
Their breasts the rue.

Narcissus had loved them,
Adonis, grown kind,
Hercules hastened
Aquila to bind.

Was Heine, the sad, sweet singer,
  Lover of days gone by,
Tricked in his songs and his singing
  By the perilous Lorelei?

Their fine-spun kirtles
Tempted the breeze,
In a moment's daring,
To kiss their knees.

The tall trees murmured
Never a word;

IN A FOREST CLEARING

No chaffinch told
The humming bird.

Pure and fragrant
As lilies white,
Dancing slowly
They passed from sight.

Did Heine, the singer of strange songs,
  Who lived while the church bells rang,
Sing, till the beings of oldtimes,
  Wakened to hear what he sang?

BERGSON

TO BERGSON

Bergson! free spirits hail thee from afar:
  Torch-bearer midst a doubt-begotten gloom
  That would trick man to grasp the hideous doom
Of nothingness with joy. To thee no bar
Cuts off the harbor: like the still north-star
  Thy mind shines steadfast, beaconing the way
  To weaker souls, who snared by the " eternal nay "
Fall mazed, as Phaeton from out Apollo's car.

Thou hast seen something of the cosmic plan;
  Extended the cathedral of Kant's thought,
  Affirming the unseen; scourged with a rod
Determinism; and, proclaimed the soul of man
  Not the arena, wherein the battle's fought,
  But the strong gladiator — co-laboring with God.

BERGSONIAN

Why, " a bare bodkin," or a jet of gas,
  Unlighted, and our souls were freed
Of the rough meshes of the dirty net
  Wherein they bleed.

Then soothing peace! Surcease of agony:
  Healing of bruises of the jagged rocks
Of doubt's dilemmas, faith's antinomies,
  And sickening shocks.

Yet we delay the doing. It is not
  We fear, like the fat Dane, that we may leap
Into conditions worse than those that now
  Murder our sleep:

But, that we play the coward, and by death
  Prove traitors. For the world is but half-made,
And man, to finish it, must fight the fight —
  Live undismayed.

The golden vision that men dream — that God
  Predestined — cannot come to pass unless
Man wills it so. A mystery that baffles thought —
  Defeats man's guess.

"CREATIVE EVOLUTION"

Existence is to me
Challenge to plunge in life;
Immersion into strife;
A call to do and dare,
To, in my might, declare
That order yet shall be.

Who knows why he hath breath —
The meaning of the whole —
The stature of the soul?
Why God, since he is good,
And fashions as he would,
Lets evil stalk the earth?

Choose, if thou wilt, a creed,
But forward the great plan
In which a part hath man:
Shirk! And the plan may be
Ungained — eternity
A cripple for its need.

Men's acts, like steel on wood,
Grave lines naught can erase,
Nor God himself efface:
The pattern at the end
Doth on our deeds depend,
Then make the pattern good!

CHRISTMAS: 1916

CHRISTMAS: 1916

(Etchings)

I

" Kyrie eleison ———,"
Mounts the cry of anguished souls,
From the depths of the bowered tropics
To the while plains of the poles.

Unending and unceasing;
Wrenched from the world's despair;
Like the smoke of a burning mountain
Rolls up the ancient prayer.

THE MODERN COMEDY

II

Blood-stained and still, the pudgy priest
  Is stretched, where once the grain
Rippled its sweet green finery
  Expectant of the rain.

Ten yards beyond, a shell-torn boy
  Curses the priest's delay;
While o'er the field, unmoved, untouched,
  The mighty cannons play.

CHRISTMAS: 1916

III

Up! and out! and across the strip
That separates foe from foe:
Up! and out! with a yell and a shout
The gaunt-faced fighters go:
Led by a stripling from the ships,
With a song in his heart and a jest on his lips,
Over the field to the battered trench —
Over the field where the dead men lie
With their filmed eyes gazing at the sky.
"Oh damn the Germans and damn the French
And damn the English who never blench!
Ho! club your rifles
And use their butts,
And jab your bayonets
Into their guts!"
Swirls of smoke and jets of fire,
Corpses ever piled up higher,
Chests that heave and limbs that strain,
Blinded eyes and stabs of pain,
Gleaming steel and leaden hail
And one flag flying in the gale.
"Oh whoa! you fellows: the trench is won!
And a damned good sporting job you've done:
But the big guns' hits
Knocked the ditch to bits,
So stow the grin
And dig yourselves in.
Oh damn the Germans and damn the French
And damn the English who never blench!"

THE MODERN COMEDY

IV

Six ships running across the sea,
As full of shrapnel as ships can be:
Six days dodging of submarines
And sweating over the might-have-beens:
Six days getting to men who give
Their lives that honor still may live:
And six men who in an office sit
Counting the cash they get for it.

CHRISTMAS: 1916

V

Blue sky and ten thousand stars,
  Hedged fields and evening hymn,
And the evil planet, red-eyed Mars,
  Below the horizon's rim.

Grey shapes that sail in the air,
  Red bombs and cots ablaze:
Women and children, blown to bits,
  To the sound of a people's praise.

THE MODERN COMEDY

VI

" Christe eleison ———,"
Mounts the cry of anguished souls,
From the depths of the bowered tropics
To the white plains of the poles.

Unending and unceasing;
Wrenched from the world's despair;
Like the smoke of a burning mountain
Rolls up the ancient prayer.

CHRISTMAS: 1916

VII

" Mother! I write these lines, for it may be that I,
After to-night, shall never write again:
They say we charge to-morrow, at the dawn —
The dawns in France are very beautiful —
Well — if I die, it will not matter much:
You ever saw through mothers' eyes and laid
Over my dull metal, broad sheets of gold
From out the stores of your great treasury of love.
So, do not cry. I do not grudge my life.
What better usage could I make of it
Than cast it, as a woman casteth jewels,
Upon my country's altar? Time ever moves
A stream, majestic, towards its far-off goal;
'Tis only we, foam-flecks upon its breast
Dream it knows turmoil; or whinny like to mares
Robbed of their foals, because we are absorbed
Before we have grown tired of the light,
Into its darker depths. Dear! God still lives;
And noble faiths, refulgent as God's self,
Live on with him. Visions of right and faith,
Now lonely flowers in a wilderness
Of weeds, making the world a garden: high hopes
Of brotherhood: emergence of broad streams
Of human joyousness: of simple rights,
Not guarded by long trains of cannonry,
But like fair Kings, enshrined within the hearts
Of all their peoples, by the peoples' love:
Laughter of children ———————— "

THE MODERN COMEDY

VIII

Oh, of old they offered her rosemary
And silk veils for her head:
But now they offer her unbleached sheets
And wet clay for a bed.

They will lay her down with her face to the north,
The red cross on her arm,
And a priest will mumble a hurried mass
To guard her soul from harm:

And some of the men will pray and some,
Unfearing men and strong,
Will figure the price that must be paid
By those who did the wrong.

CHRISTMAS: 1916

IX

" Oh, hops? Yes, he knew hops — damned little more!
For all his forty years, before this war
He never stretched his legs outside of Kent.
Hops need much watching! so like a mole he spent
His life in his own burrows, training hops
To grow up sticks. His prayers were for his crops,
If he made prayers at all. Ten months each year
He sweated, that the taverns might sell beer
Of which he bought one pot each night, himself,
To make him dream of — hops! The heaped-up wealth
Of India, had not dragged him from the fields
Before the fruit the giant green vine yields,
Was safe within the oasts. Italian skies;
Fair women wearing silken draperies;
Soaring cathedrals; statues, gleaming white
'Midst cypress trees upon a moon-lit night;
The song of poets; music, bridging space —
He had not heard of: but his face
Would brighten somewhat if one mentioned hops,
Or chestnuts, pollarded, to grow their props.
God, a dull oaf! And now, beneath a sun
That kisses grapes, not hops, his drab life done,
From all his stupid, hop-made cares released,
He spreads for kites and crows a dubious feast.
Yet, as I live, I heard him as he fought
For breath, and with his short-nailed, coarse hands caught
At the brown stubble in his pain, mutter of faith
Kept to the death; and of a shining wraith

That men call English honor; of a light,
Born in Arthurian times, which by its might
Would break fair highways for a later breed
Of nobler men. Good God! queer words indeed,
For one whose life was dedicate to hops! "

CHRISTMAS: 1916

X

Within the crater, where dead men, in rows,
  Lay like sardines, against each other pressed,
A calm-eyed Tommy smoked his short-stemmed clay,
  And spread his breakfast on a dead man's chest.

Green skins and breakfast tea! My stomach retched,
  And in a trench, abandoned on my right,
I sought a moment's respite from the filth,
  The lust and fury of the hellish fight.

Would God, I had not gone! from out the trench's clay
  A corpse, from its waist up, protruded evilly,
Naked, with blue veins raised upon white flesh —
  The blasting climax of indecency!

THE MODERN COMEDY

XI

" Kyrie eleison ———,"
Mounts the cry of anguished souls,
From the depths of the bowered tropics
To the white plains of the poles.

Unending and unceasing;
Wrenched from the world's despair;
Like the smoke of a burning mountain
Rolls up the ancient prayer.

SUMMER SONG

Oh, youth is the time for loving, they say,
  Oh, youth is the time, says the poet;
And Tennyson's throstle whistles clear,
  " I know it, I know it, I know it! "

Oh, youth is past, but I still can climb
  The hill where the windflowers quiver;
My heart is as young and my love as fresh
  As it was by the rush-edged river, —

As it was by the rush-edged river, the day
  When we saw the kingfisher fishing;
And a solemn-eyed pike swam slowly by
  For a chub or a minnow wishing.

All life is the time for loving, I say,
  No matter the song of the poet;
And Tennyson's throstle whistles clear,
  " I know it, I know it, I know it! "

SONG

Come with me away, love,
  Somewhere there is heather;
Let us leave the dusty streets,
  Leave this gloomy weather.

What's the use of living, love,
  Where they talk of money?
Better far the scent of hay
  And the taste of honey.

I will find for breakfast, love,
  Eggs laid by the plover;
And when stars announce the night
  Make your bed of clover.

Let us go together, love,
  Flowers are upspringing;
" Life was made for lovers," love,
  All the birds are singing.

PICTURES

THE DUNE: OGUNQUIT, MAINE

(On a Picture by Mary Butler)

Tufted with ragged wire grass, the dune
  Reigns like a monarch on the level sand
Where rocks have crumbled and the long low waves
  Creep in upon the land.

Beneath its feet the yellow sands are wet
  And gullied into shallow pools; far out the sea
Heaves its pale turquoise bosom while soft clouds veil
  The sky's immensity.

Vastness and peace enwrap the soul about,
  Soothing its weariness, as in the desert way
A silken vesture soothes the heat-wracked limbs
  Of one who toiled all day.

SLEEP

(On Clara T. MacChesney's Picture "Sleep")

Before the languor of thy sleep-closed eyes,
  The pathos of thy passive weariness,
  Man is compelled to pause — he may not guess
What longings fill thy bosom, nor surmise
If to thy vast fatigue are added miseries
  Of toil for bread. Sleep, like a sentinel
  Who guards the chamber where a king doth dwell
From prying eyes, guards thy soul's subtleties.

Inscrutable as Egypt's ancient Sphinx;
  Unfathomable as Mona Lisa's smile;
Priestess of that sweet sacrifice that links
  Creation in a whole — sleep on, awhile —
Beyond the gloom stars shine, and silent keep
Watch o'er thy baby whilst thou art asleep.

BANKRUPT

Dear, I am bankrupt! I cannot take
  The gift you offer me. I am not one
  Who, having feasted, deems his duty done
If thanks be mumbled; nor, who would slake
His thirst with draughts of generous wine and make
  Return in water from a roadside pool,
  Fouled with dead leaves and dust. He were a fool
To play for gold who hath not gold to stake.

I would my heart, of love's royal currency,
  Had half the store it held before the eyes
  Of Cressids made me spendthrift. Go hence:
I am not worthy of your constancy —
  Being but ashes — and, alas, too wise
  To take your sovereigns for my tarnished pence.

DIRGE

Ring the bell!
For the green waves cover
The body of him
Who was her lover.

Human lovers
Bring sailors death:
Human kisses
Still their breath:
For the sea is greedy,
She will not share
The bodies of those
Who held her fair.

Ring the bell!
For the green waves cover
The body of him
Who was her lover.

AWAKE!

I, who love peace,
  Fling wide the door:
Bidding men arm
  And march to war.

These are the crimes
  That sear like flame,
Confessed, upheld —
  A nation's shame!

Children murdered,
  Dishonor crowned,
Fair countries raped,
  Free peoples bound.

I, who held love
  Supremest law,
Cry from the heights —
  March forth to war!

TO PHYLLIS

I do not ask a lock of hair,
  Nor crave the glove upon thy hand;
Wish not the rose thy bosom fair
  Hath with its heavings softly fanned:
Such things be sweet, but that heart cramped and small
That knowing thee desireth less than all.

TO PHYLLIS IN MAY TIME

The birds are courting on the bough
  While daisies grow beneath;
May not a lass a kiss allow,
  To him who brings a wreath?
    Were he too bold, if he should say
    That ripe, red lips can pain allay?

The grey-gowned doves have sought out mates;
  The bee, the clover's heart;
Why wilt thou not unbar thy gates
  And ease thy lover's smart?
    Sure 'twere no sin if thou shouldst guess
    The unput question, answering " Yes."

THE SPIRIT OF WINE

Ripened by sunshine,
  Unharmed by the rain,
The vats in the autumn
  Are red with my stain:
Begetter of laughter,
  Mother of joy,
Youth to the greybeard,
  Strength to the boy,
A symbol to mystics,
  Sin to the priest,
Honored by princes,
  Lord of the feast;
Courage to lovers,
  Healer of strife,
Answer incarnate
  To the riddle of life.

MAGDALENE

What do I know of this soul of mine —
  What of my fair body!
Is the crimson vine of the autumn days
  Less than the girdled tree?

Can my soul escape as a bird doth fly,
  From out my body's mesh;
Or sing a song to another soul
  Save through my fragrant flesh?

Are they twain or one — I do not know —
  But the kisses that purchased dole
Were not the flames of my body's fire,
  But blossoms of my soul.

AVE ECCLESIASTICA!

Oh the Bishop's cross it has two bars
And the Pope's cross it has three;
But the cross of Christ it had but one
And he died on it for me.

LAGGARD

She stood upon a rocky steep-browed hill;
  She did not know that I was there to see;
Snow-flurries whirled against her half-bared breast,
    And the wind blew fitfully.

I saw her raise her arms, as one who pleads:
  I do not know to whom she prayed or why:
Surely, a woman must have suffered much
    To pray to such a sky.

I think her hair was like Australian gold —
  The light was all behind her — and she seemed
Fair as the daughter of a Northern king
    Of whom some poet dreamed.

Then, as the twilight wholly faded out
  I climbed the hill — Ah! but I climbed too late:
Only the wind was loitering on the hill
    Mist-crowned and desolate.

EN ROUTE

EN ROUTE

I

SETTING OUT

When I was young, it seemed, each day the sun
Shone in a cloudless sky. Life's road ran straight
Made of clean gravel. Each golden day ere done
Should witness miles devoured — see progress won.
How clean the gravel was: nor dirt nor weed
Found lodgment on its surface. None had need
To tarry. The road was clear: let all men run!
So light the task, so certain was the goal,
So clean the flower-fringed road I lightly trod,
I saw no snares to trap my eager soul
Singing upon its journey unto God:
Each day, I heard the music of the streams;
Each night, Heaven's lutists played to me in dreams.

THE MODERN COMEDY

II

IN THE VALLEY

White violets gave place to holly-hocks;
Frail hare-bells to the crimson-bosomed rose;
Windflowers to harlot poppies, which disclose
Their chaliced sweets e'er any lover knocks:
And blowzy girls went by with lads in smocks,
And silk-gowned maids rode by with perfumed knights,
To spacious castles, all ablaze with lights —
All doors stood open: none had need of locks!
So was I snared and caught as in a net:
So I blasphemed and drank the perfumed wine,
While harpers played, and luscious fruits were set
Upon the board, where kings were wont to dine:
And they who set the board were fair; and I
Feared naught, except the saying, " All men die! "

EN ROUTE

III

THE RISE OF THE HILL

The road is stony and runs up a hill;
No flowers are there and both my feet are bruised;
So rough a way must be but rarely used;
The wind blows through me and I am a-chill:
Yet I, despite my pain, dare not stand still
Because behind me, I am feared there stands
A flag-decked castle, set in flowered lands,
Where once I stayed and feasted to my fill —
Where once I think I held a face I saw
Within it, as so beautiful that it
Would serve me, in some sense, as 'twere a door
Unto the place where God's fair angels sit.
Clouds dip to meet me: I may not pause nor rest
Till I have passed the rough hill's distant crest.

WILLIAMSPORT POEMS

IN WILLIAMSPORT

"After reading Grantchester"

In Williamsport I fain would be
Where life is lived delightfully;
Where men have time to breathe the air,
Beside the river running free
To reach the Chesapeake and sea,
And keep their little gardens fair.
I will get back to Williamsport,
Where men are men of better sort
Than those, who laboring are but slaves
To labor till they reach their graves;
Where men are such that they would die
If God shut off the cloud-flecked sky.

In Williamsport, as you've heard say
They toil the better for their play;
There's many a shop and many a mill,
Drab railroad cars there get their fill
Of things they make and things they sell,
(And all they make is made quite well).
But, as for me — 'tis this I want:
To climb the hills of Vallamont;
To smell the pines upon the breeze,
To see the newly budded trees
When Springtime sprinkles in the grass
Blue violets where'er I pass;
And birds are twittering and cheeping,
Gathering straw for their housekeeping.
Then skimming shadows shift and change
Upon the long Bald Eagle range,

Whose hills, where white pines grew afore,
Run all the way to Jersey Shore
In ordered rows, like workmen's shacks,
Their sharp-edged crests like bisons' backs.
And farther down there is a gap
Between the slopes of lower hills,
Whereon grow young trees full of sap,
Through which a merry white stream spills
Its water into pools, and wise
Old trout lie hid and watch for flies.
And on beyond the gap, a ridge,
Straight as a river-spanning bridge,
Or that which led to Wotan's hall
Before the fire devoured all —
And sometimes, too, on cloudy days,
The ridge is caught within the haze,
Till whether ridge or cloud it be
No man can say with certainty.

New York in summer time is hot,
Whether a man doth work or not;
But, oh, in Williamsport, at eve,
The air is always sweet to breathe;
And every night the breeze comes stealing
From the mountains for our healing.
I would that I might go to-morrow,
Free from care as free from sorrow,
Up the Loyalsock that sings
Full fifty miles before it flings,
Where the tall trees sway and quiver,
Its limpid water in the river —

IN WILLIAMSPORT

I would that I this day might stand,
With creel on hip and rod in hand,
Above the dam, beyond the park,
With naught to do till it grew dark;
Oh, then through fields of corn and wheat
I'd saunter on on willing feet,
Past farms and cabins till I came
Abreast of Farragut, and there
I'd find the Red Rocks, rearing bare
Above the water, still the same
As on the day I saw a-fishing,
A tall blue-heron, greatly wishing
That the bass would swim in shore.
Oh, I remember how that day,
When shadows lengthening, slanted more,
And two striped chipmunks ceased to play,
How down I walked to Big Rocks pool —
Slowly eddying, dark and cool —
How I stripped me to my skin,
Caught my breath and waded in;
Dove into the shadowed pool —
Slowly eddying, dark and cool —
Shook the water from my hair.
Saw the great rocks, grey and bare.
Turned upon my back and lay
Like a child worn out by play;
Without motion, wondering why
Nothing moved, not even I.
How there I floated till I caught
Sight of the moon above the trees,
When six strong strokes my body brought

Back to the shore, where, in the breeze,
I shivered till I quickly dressed,
From my pouch tobacco pressed
In my pipe, set it afire,
Blew sweet smoke into the air,
And, feeling cleansed of every care,
While the pale moon climbed up higher
Tramped for home across the fields.

While in New York, a man may eat
At Moquin's, or in Bleecker street;
In Boston, those who oft have dined
At Parker's, swear it is refined;
And Kugler's, in the Quaker City,
Is good, but high-priced, more's the pity;
And men, whose linen's chaste and cleanly,
Assure me, Pittsburgh's best's the Schenley
But, oh, in Williamsport, I know
Of places where I'd rather go;
Where one may drop into a chair
And feel he's sure of welcome there;
Of clubs, where one may talk at ease
Over the coffee and the cheese;
Where one may drink deep draughts of ale
And hear a jest, or tell a tale.

What men soever built the road
Up Lycoming creek, have showed
That if men do just as they ought,
Instead of as by text-books taught,
The things they build will pleasure give
To men who after them shall live.

IN WILLIAMSPORT

Oh, never a road more good to see,
It turns and twists entrancingly;
Crosses the creek each mile or two,
Then crosses back as if it knew
That it is sweet to cross swift water,
Filled with jollity and laughter;
Sweet to see swift water scurry
Under the bridges in a hurry;
Sweet to cross the lazy reaches,
Shadowed by the rocks and trees,
Firs and hemlocks, pines and beeches,
Forming a gigantic frieze
'Neath the ceiling of the sky
Where the clouds, like sea-gulls, fly.
And it is good in days of May
When we with chilly days have done,
When dogwood blooms, and in the sun
The robin swells in self-esteem,
Or trills his careless roundelay;
To fish Trout Run or Pleasant Stream,
Or Gray's, or Hoagland's, as may hap
The dice to fall from Fortune's lap;
And whether you cast a fly, or drown
The humble worm, or red or brown,
Why trout are trout, and trout will fight
No matter on what lure they bite.

Oh, these are the chains that bind me fast
To the city set amidst the hills;
Golden chains whose strength shall last
While water gossips in the rills;

THE MODERN COMEDY

Streams and mountains, trees and flowers,
Scented winds and sunlit hours,
Men and women staunch and true,
Gardens sparkling with the dew;
Men and women scorning lies,
Evening calms and morning skies;
Men and women who have heard
Sigh of pine tree, song of bird;
Who have loved the well-tilled valleys,
Who have walked through pine tree alleys,
Who have watched the water leaping,
Watched the water slowly creeping;
Heard the whippoorwill's sad crying,
Heard the swish of owls a-flying,
And the katydids at night;
Who have drunk, in their own right,
From a chalice overflowing,
Deep of beauty, past all knowing.

IN MEMORIAM

(Seth T. McCormick, August 6, 1916)

He did not steer his course to capture fame;
  Nor warp his creeds to suit the public whim:
The broad-striped tunic and the crowd's acclaim
  Were infamy to him

Unless they came, as flowers crown a vine,
  Just tribute to a life lived in the light;
And full of perfume, like a golden wine
  Grown mellow with Time's flight.

He hated shams; but loved true men the more;
  Gave them as gifts, more precious than much gold,
A living friendship, clean, rock-ribbed and sure,
  And kindness manifold.

In royal sunsets, ships from harbors sail,
  Out, and far out, their canvas all ablaze
With magic colors, that too quickly pale
  The while we stand and gaze:

So he passed out into uncharted space,
  Still captain of his soul's integrity:
Leaving to us, for heritage, the grace
  Of his rich memory.

IN MEMORIAM

(Patrick M. Malloy, November 29, 1915)

When the Mad Dean, who was of your own race,
Sat down to write the comments of the town
On his own death, his skilled pen ran apace
To tell how fleeting should be his renown.
Ah! but he lied: his fame abates no jot,
The world still gladly pays to him his due;
And that, he hoped, that one who knew him not,
Should say of him, we too, can say of you:

> " He never courted men in station,
> Of no man's greatness was afraid,
> Because he sought for no man's aid.
> Without regarding private ends,
> Spent all his credit for his friends;
> But power was never in his thought
> And wealth he valued not a groat."

We who have clasped your hands in happy days
Shall miss you when we gather round the board;
And though we go our old familiar ways,
Our feasts will strike a little lower chord:
We shall hold dearer those two men you loved,
Patrick, the saint, and Burns, of golden tongue,
Who made the world confess, they stand approved
Who to the world have manhood's challenge flung.

God guard thy soul — for us, alive to keep
The shamrock where thy body lies asleep.

"GO FORTH"

(To Battery D, upon its departure from Williamsport, August 30th, 1917)

Go forth! Go forth: and if our tightened throats
  Should be betrayed by over-brimming eyes,
Bear not within your breasts the memory
  Of these our frailties:

But bear abroad the memory of the pride,
  Flooding our souls — too deep for spoken word —
That when the menace loomed and tocsin pealed
  You answered — "We have heard."

Go forth! So shall the monster that hath made
  A shambles of the lands where flowers bloomed
And vineyards bore their fruit for peaceful men,
  Be to destruction doomed.

Go forth! The winds that bridge the wide-spread seas
  Shall bring you tidings of the love we bear:
Champions of liberty, go forth, go forth!
  God have you in his care!

TO ————————

Grant me to hear the low, clear sound
  Of thy dear voice when I lie dying;
Since I in thee have refuge found
Grant me to hear the low, clear sound
Whose golden bands have held me bound; —
  Above the night-wind's mournful sighing
Grant me to hear the low, clear sound
  Of thy dear voice when I lie dying.

Thus would I put me out to sea
  Within mine ears thy dear voice sounding;
Unfearful of the stern decree,
Thus would I put me out to sea
For harbors that uncharted be; —
  Unfearful of the great waves' pounding,
Thus would I put me out to sea
  Within mine ears thy dear voice sounding.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

NOV 29 1918

NOV 29 1918

NOV [illegible] 8

DEC - 2 1918

DEC - 3 1918

8161 9 1 03[illegible]

form 418

NOV 29 1918